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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 000089

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [AF](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: BOUCHER AND FOREIGN MINISTER ABDULLAH COVER IRAQ,  
IRAN, AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

ABU DHABI 00000089 001.4 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Michele Sison, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a meeting with Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher and Ambassador Sison on January 14, United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan discussed regional security issues in addition to the Emirates' efforts in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Foreign Minister shared concerns that Iran's influence "permeates" into every corner of Iraq. He questioned the Al-Maliki government's ability to engage with other governments in the region, and asked that the U.S. not push his government too forcefully to back the Sunnis in Iraq, warning that a sectarian civil war may expand far outside Iraq's borders. The UAE Government is considering another \$30 million in reconstruction aid to Afghanistan, but wants to focus aid on building clinics and schools instead of roads. The UAE continues to try and get the Afghan and Pakistani intelligence services to work together -- "hopefully very soon" -- and is presently expecting a delegation to visit from Tehran to explain Iranian activities in the region. End Summary.

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Iraq/Iran  
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¶2. (S) After pointing out that Boucher doesn't cover Iraq, Foreign Minister Abdullah clearly had his mind on events there ) discussing Iraq before moving into South Asian issues. Although encouraged by recent U.S. actions to eliminate Iran's influence in Iraq, the Foreign Minister warned that "their (Iran's) influence does not stop at the Green Zone. . . It permeates into every corner, through the Green Zone, the militias, etc." He suggested that either Iraq is "totally under the control of the Iranians, or they (the Iraqis) are simply unable to act and implement any policy decisions." Referring to the Secretary's recent remarks, he stated that "I understand the politics in Washington" but that "there is no way that we see that this government (Prime Minister Maliki's) can engage with the rest of us."

¶3. (S) Foreign Minister Abdullah asked that the U.S. "not put us in a position of forcefully backing the Sunnis in Iraq, or the Iraq civil war that everyone is concerned about is likely to become a regional civil war involving many more players." He complained to Ambassador Sison that "No one was stopping the Shi'a violence against the Sunnis in Iraq -- not the Iraqi military or security forces, not the international forces."

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Afghanistan

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14. (C) Thanking the UAE for its efforts in Afghanistan, Boucher said the U.S. is preparing to announce billions of dollars in aid for the training and equipping of the military and police, building roads and electrical grids, and building provincial government and justice centers throughout the country. Foreign Minister Abdullah said that his government is considering a new \$30 million in reconstruction funds for Afghanistan. He noted that while there are already major international commitments to build roads, "there are significant gaps elsewhere," and the UAE is more interested in "encouraging more clinics and schools -- things that are not getting the same level of attention from other donors." Boucher noted an enormous need for roads, especially in the south, and asked that the UAE not set aside the idea.

15. (C). Speaking about current relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Foreign Minister Abdullah offered that the UAE is trying to get the two intelligence services to "talk together -- hopefully very soon." He commented that the Pakistanis are now the "more cooperative of the two parties," adding that this is a reversal from past experiences. He said that rhetoric between Karzai and Musharraf often "gets in the way" of meaningful discussion and that "we need to push forward at the deputy levels" if we want to make significant progress. Abdullah described Musharraf's call for elections as legitimate, noting that "he can read the signs of the times, and recognizes that the time has come."

16. (C) The Foreign Minister inquired if the Iranians were active in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Boucher noted there are concerns that Iran was trying to expand their influence. Abdullah said that during his January 9 visit to Tehran, Foreign Minister Mottaki had proposed sending a delegation to the UAE to explain Iran's activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and that that visit was expected soon. Abdullah offered to share what information he could after the visit.

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17. (U) This cable was approved by SCA Senior Advisor Caitlin Hayden.  
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